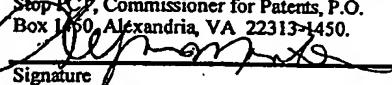


COPY

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

International Application No. :	PCT/US03/27087
Applicant:	BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (INVESTMENTS) LIMITED
International Filing Date:	(28.08.2003) 28 AUGUST 2003
Earliest Priority Date:	(09.09.2002) 09 SEPTEMBER 2002
Title:	A PROCESS FOR REDUCING NITROGEN CONTAINING COMPOUNDS AND LIGNIN IN TOBACCO
Agent's File Reference:	BW-433-1

37 CFR § 1.10	
I hereby certify that the application/correspondence attached hereto is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated below and is addressed to Mail Stop PCT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.	
Signature	
Printed Name of person mailing correspondence	LYNN MINTON
Date of Deposit	05 April 2004
EV100711065US	

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (as International Preliminary Examining Authority)  
Mail Stop PCT  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

31 March, 2004

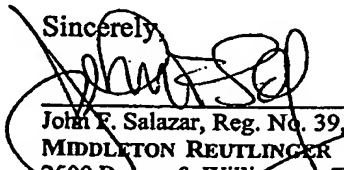
Dear Sirs:

**SUBMISSION OF PCT DEMAND UNDER CHAPTER II**

The applicant referenced above wishes to request the Demand for the International Preliminary Examination before the 19-month deadline of 09 April 2004. Enclosed is the following information:

1. Transmittal Letter;
2. PCT Demand, pages 1-3;
3. Amendments under Article 34;
4. Replacement sheets, pages 3-4 for the specification;
5. Replacement sheets, page 13 for the claims;
6. Fee Calculation Sheet;
7. Payment via Credit Card Payment Form - PTO-2038;
8. Return Postcard evidencing receipt of above items.

Sincerely,

  
John F. Salazar, Reg. No. 39,353  
MIDDLETON REUTLINGER  
2500 Brown & Williamson Tower  
(401 S. Fourth Avenue, Suite 2500)  
Louisville KY 40202 US  
ph (502) 584-1135  
fax (502) 561-0442

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

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The demand must be filed directly with the competent International Preliminary Examining Authority or, if two or more Authorities are competent, with the one chosen by the applicant. The full name or two-letter code of that Authority may be indicated by the applicant on the line below:

IPEA/ US

# PCT

## CHAPTER II

### DEMAND

under Article 31 of the Patent Cooperation Treaty:  
The undersigned requests that the international application specified below be the subject of international preliminary examination according to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only	
Identification of IPEA	Date of receipt of DEMAND
<b>Box No. I IDENTIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION</b> Applicant's or agent's file reference <b>BW-433-1</b>	
International application No. <b>PCT/US03/27087</b>	International filing date (day/month/year) <b>(28.08.2003)</b> <b>28 AUGUST 2003</b>
(Earliest) Priority date (day/month/year) <b>(09.09.2002)</b> <b>09 SEPTEMBER 2002</b>	
Title of invention <b>A PROCESS FOR REDUCING NITROGEN CONTAINING COMPOUNDS AND LIGNIN IN TOBACCO</b>	
<b>Box No. II APPLICANT(S)</b>	
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.) <b>BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (INVESTMENTS) LIMITED</b> <b>Globe House, 1 Water Street</b> <b>London WC2R 3LA</b> <b>United Kingdom</b>	
Telephone No. <b>44-23-8793731</b>	
Facsimile No. <b>44-23-80779856</b>	
Teleprinter No.	
Applicant's registration No. with the Office	
State (that is, country) of nationality: <b>GB</b>	State (that is, country) of residence: <b>GB</b>
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.) <b>MUA, John-Paul</b> <b>234 Chadwick Circle</b> <b>Macon, Georgia 31204</b> <b>US</b> <b>(applicant for U.S. only)</b>	
State (that is, country) of nationality: <b>US</b>	State (that is, country) of residence: <b>US</b>
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.) <b>HAYES, Brad L.</b> <b>111 Holly Lakes Drive</b> <b>Dublin, Georgia 31021</b> <b>US</b> <b>(applicant for U.S. only)</b>	
State (that is, country) of nationality: <b>US</b>	State (that is, country) of residence: <b>US</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further applicants are indicated on a continuation sheet.	

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Sheet No. 2.

International application No.  
PCT/US03/27087

Continuation of Box No. II APPLICANT(S)

If none of the following sub-boxes is used, this sheet should not be included in the demand.

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.)

BRADLEY, JR., Kenneth J.  
3360 Stinsonville Road  
Macon, Georgia 31204  
US  
(applicant for U.S. only)

State (that is, country) of nationality:  
US

State (that is, country) of residence:  
US

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.)

State (that is, country) of nationality:

State (that is, country) of residence:

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.)

State (that is, country) of nationality:

State (that is, country) of residence:

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country.)

State (that is, country) of nationality:

State (that is, country) of residence:

☐ Further applicants are indicated on another continuation sheet.

COPY

Sheet No. 3

International application No.  
PCT/US03/27087

**Box No. III AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE; OR ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE**

The following person is ☒ agent ☐ common representative  
and ☒ has been appointed earlier and represents the applicant(s) also for international preliminary examination.  
☐ is hereby appointed and any earlier appointment of (an) agent(s)/common representative is hereby revoked.  
☐ is hereby appointed, specifically for the procedure before the International Preliminary Examining Authority, in addition to the agent(s)/common representative appointed earlier.

Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation.  
The address must include postal code and name of country.)

SALAZAR, John F.  
Middleton Reutlinger  
2500 Brown & Williamson Tower  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202  
US

Telephone No.  
(502) 584-1135

Facsimile No.  
(502) 561-0442

Teleprinter No.

Agent's registration No. with the Office  
39,353

☐ Address for correspondence: Mark this check-box where no agent or common representative is/has been appointed and the space above is used instead to indicate a special address to which correspondence should be sent.

**Box No. IV BASIS FOR INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**

**Statement concerning amendments:\***

1. The applicant wishes the international preliminary examination to start on the basis of:

- ☐ the international application as originally filed  
the description ☐ as originally filed  
☒ as amended under Article 34  
the claims ☐ as originally filed  
☐ as amended under Article 19 (together with any accompanying statement)  
☒ as amended under Article 34  
the drawings ☒ as originally filed  
☐ as amended under Article 34

2. ☐ The applicant wishes any amendment to the claims under Article 19 to be considered as reversed.  
3. ☐ The applicant wishes the start of the international preliminary examination to be postponed until the expiration of the applicable time limit under Rule 69.1(d).  
4. ☐ The applicant expressly wishes the international preliminary examination to start earlier than at the expiration of the applicable time limit under Rule 54bis.1(a).

\* Where no check-box is marked, international preliminary examination will start on the basis of the international application as originally filed or, where a copy of amendments to the claims under Article 19 and/or amendments of the international application under Article 34 are received by the International Preliminary Examining Authority before it has begun to draw up a written opinion or the international preliminary examination report, as so amended.

Language for the purposes of international preliminary examination: English

- ☒ which is the language in which the international application was filed.  
☐ which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search.  
☐ which is the language of publication of the international application.  
☐ which is the language of the translation (to be) furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination.

**Box No. V ELECTION OF STATES**

The filing of this demand constitutes the election of all Contracting States which are designated and are bound by Chapter II of the PCT.

COPY

Sheet No. 4

International application No.  
PCT/US03/27087

**Box No. VI CHECK LIST**

The demand is accompanied by the following elements, in the language referred to in Box No. IV, for the purposes of international preliminary examination:

- |  |   |   |        |
|--|---|---|--------|
| 1. translation of international application                              | : | 8 | sheets |
| 2. amendments under Article 34   | : | 8 | sheets |
| 3. copy (or, where required, translation) of amendments under Article 19 | : |   | sheets |
| 4. copy (or, where required, translation) of statement under Article 19  | : |   | sheets |
| 5. letter  | : | 1 | sheets |
| 6. other (specify)   | : | 1 | sheets |

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only  
received not received

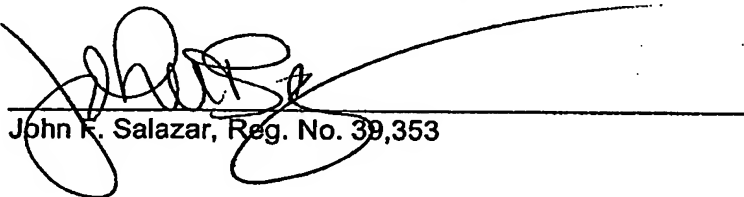
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The demand is also accompanied by the item(s) marked below:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fee calculation sheet                             | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> statement explaining lack of signature                         |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> original separate power of attorney                          | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> sequence listing in computer readable form                     |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> original general power of attorney                           | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> tables in computer readable form related to a sequence listing |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> copy of general power of attorney; reference number, if any: | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify): RETURN POSTCARD                    |

**Box No. VII SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, AGENT OR COMMON REPRESENTATIVE**

Next to each signature, indicate the name of the person signing and the capacity in which the person signs (if such capacity is not obvious from reading the demand).

  
John K. Salazar, Reg. No. 39,353

For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only

1. Date of actual receipt of DEMAND:

2. Adjusted date of receipt of demand due to CORRECTIONS under Rule 60.1(b):

3. ☐ The date of receipt of the demand is AFTER the expiration of 19 months from the priority date and item 4 or 5, below, does not apply.  
☐ The applicant has been informed accordingly.
4. ☐ The date of receipt of the demand is WITHIN the time limit of 19 months from the priority date as extended by virtue of Rule 80.5.
5. ☐ Although the date of receipt of the demand is after the expiration of 19 months from the priority date, the delay in arrival is EXCUSED pursuant to Rule 82.

6. ☐ The date of receipt of the demand is AFTER the expiration of the time limit under Rule 54bis.1(a) and item 7 or 8, below, does not apply.
7. ☐ The date of receipt of the demand is WITHIN the time limit under Rule 54bis.1(a) as extended by virtue of Rule 80.5.
8. ☐ Although the date of receipt of the demand is after the expiration of the time limit under Rule 54bis.1(a), the delay in arrival is EXCUSED pursuant to Rule 82.

For International Bureau use only

Demand received from IPEA on:

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## PCT

## CHAPTER II

## FEE CALCULATION SHEET

## Annex to the Demand

<b>International application No.</b> PCT/US03/27087	<b>For International Preliminary Examining Authority use only</b>								
<b>Applicant's or agent's file reference</b> BW-433-1	<b>Date stamp of the IPEA</b>								
<b>Applicant</b> BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (INVESTMENTS) LIMITED									
<b>CALCULATION OF PRESCRIBED FEES</b>  1. Preliminary examination fee ..... 600 P  2. Handling fee ( <i>Applicants from certain States are entitled to a reduction of 75% of the handling fee. Where the applicant is (or all applicants are) so entitled, the amount to be entered at H is 25% of the handling fee.</i> ) ..... 162 H  3. Total of prescribed fees Add the amounts entered at P and H and enter total in the TOTAL box ..... \$762.00 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">TOTAL</div>									
<b>MODE OF PAYMENT</b> <table style="width: 100%;"><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> authorization to charge deposit account with the IPEA (see below)</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> cash</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> cheque</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> revenue stamps</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> postal money order</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> coupons</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> bank draft</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify):</td></tr></table> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;"><b>CREDIT CARD PAYMENT FORM</b> (PTO-2038)</div>		<input type="checkbox"/> authorization to charge deposit account with the IPEA (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/> cash	<input type="checkbox"/> cheque	<input type="checkbox"/> revenue stamps	<input type="checkbox"/> postal money order	<input type="checkbox"/> coupons	<input type="checkbox"/> bank draft	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> authorization to charge deposit account with the IPEA (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/> cash								
<input type="checkbox"/> cheque	<input type="checkbox"/> revenue stamps								
<input type="checkbox"/> postal money order	<input type="checkbox"/> coupons								
<input type="checkbox"/> bank draft	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify):								
<b>AUTHORIZATION TO CHARGE (OR CREDIT) DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</b> ( <i>This mode of payment may not be available at all IPEAs</i> ) <table style="width: 100%;"><tr><td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"><input type="checkbox"/> Authorization to charge the total fees indicated above.  <input type="checkbox"/> (<i>This check-box may be marked only if the conditions for deposit accounts of the IPEA so permit</i>) Authorization to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the total fees indicated above.</td><td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">IPEA/ _____ Deposit Account No.: _____ Date: _____ Name: _____ Signature: _____</td></tr></table>		<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization to charge the total fees indicated above.  <input type="checkbox"/> ( <i>This check-box may be marked only if the conditions for deposit accounts of the IPEA so permit</i> ) Authorization to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the total fees indicated above.	IPEA/ _____ Deposit Account No.: _____ Date: _____ Name: _____ Signature: _____						
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization to charge the total fees indicated above.  <input type="checkbox"/> ( <i>This check-box may be marked only if the conditions for deposit accounts of the IPEA so permit</i> ) Authorization to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the total fees indicated above.	IPEA/ _____ Deposit Account No.: _____ Date: _____ Name: _____ Signature: _____								

COPY

In re: PCT Application of )  
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO )  
(INVESTMENTS) LIMITED )  
)

PCT APPLICATION NO.: PCT/US03/27087)

FILED: 28 AUGUST 2003 )  
PRIORITY DATED: 09 SEPTEMBER 2002)  
FOR: A PROCESS FOR REDUCING )  
NITROGEN CONTAINING )  
COMPOUNDS AND LIGNIN IN )  
TOBACCO )

-----

AMENDMENTS UNDER PCT ARTICLE 34

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks  
Mail Stop PCT  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sirs:

We are herewith amending the above referenced application under PCT Article 34.

Statement Under Rule 46.4

The description is being amended (as attached) and the replacement pages 3 and 4 of the description are also attached. Claims 1 - 3 and 5-8 remain in the application. Claim 4 is cancelled. Applicant's attorney has substantively amended claims 1 and 3. The amended claims 1 and 3 replace the original claims originally filed in the above referenced application. Claims 2, 5-8 are unchanged.

Letter Under Section 205(b)

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Under the PCT Section 205(b) a letter must accompany replacement sheets containing amendments to the description and to the claims indicating the differences between what was originally filed and what changes are being made. Following is a marked up version of the amended specification and claims and the replacement pages.



COPY

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

The paragraph on page 3, line 17 has been amended as follows:

More particularly, the present invention is directed to a method for reducing the lignin and nitrogenous content of tobacco material, including cured tobacco whole leaf, fines, scraps, stems and lamina, as well as burley leaf and stem, comprising the steps of contacting tobacco material with a first aqueous solvent, such as water, at a temperature of about ~~60EG~~ 60°C to ~~80EG~~ 80°C for about 0.5 to 1 hours; separating an aqueous tobacco extract from a tobacco fiber portion; contacting this washed tobacco fiber portion with a solution containing from 1% to 5% (weight/weight) alkali metal hydroxide and from 2.5% to 12% (weight/weight) hydrogen peroxide at a temperature of about ~~25EG~~ 25°C to ~~120EG~~ 120°C for about 0.5 to 4 hours; and, separating the resulting solution from the tobacco fiber portion. The resulting tobacco product is then dried and used in the manufacture of cigarette articles. Alternatively, the extract or a portion thereof, may be added to the tobacco product before drying.

The paragraph on page 4, line 8 has been amended as follows:

COPY

In a preferred method of carrying out the lignin and nitrogen reduction process of the present invention, tobacco materials (10) in the form of flue cured and burley stems, scraps, fines, and/or lamina are contacted with a first aqueous solvent (12) such as water, at a temperature of about ~~60EC~~ 60°C to ~~80EC~~ 80°C for about 0.5 to 1 hour. The contacting of the tobacco with the water (12) may be conducted in a tank or similar mixing vessel in which the water and tobacco are heated and agitated. The resulting aqueous tobacco extract, containing flavor compounds, is separated from the tobacco fiber portion, preferably by centrifugation (14). The tobacco/water slurry may be pumped into a centrifuge from the mixing vessel and centrifugally separated therein. Once removed from the tobacco fiber or lamina portion, the aqueous tobacco extract (15) may be reserved for reapplication to the fiber with or without separate processing. In one embodiment, the aqueous tobacco extract (15) may be contacted with a solid phase adsorbent (17), such as Bentonite or a cationic resin, in a vessel and then separated therefrom by centrifugation (10) or a similar separation process well known in the art. In another embodiment, the aqueous tobacco extract (15) may be pumped or passed through specialty filters, membranes, or column packed adsorbent/adsorbent materials to remove soluble nitrogenous components, such as nitrates, proteins and nitrosamines

COPY

(TSBAs), and polyphenolic compounds, and the like. The nitrogen-reduced aqueous tobacco extract containing flavor compounds may then be concentrated (23) by vacuum evaporation, and added back to the reconstituted tobacco paper (31).

COPY

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method of making a tobacco material with reduced levels of lignin and nitrogenous compounds comprising:

- (a) contacting a tobacco material with a first aqueous solvent at a temperature of about 25°C to 80° C for about 0.5 to 2 hours to provide an aqueous tobacco extract and a tobacco fiber portion;
- (b) separating said aqueous tobacco extract from said tobacco fiber portion;
- (c) contacting at a temperature from about 25°C to 120°C said tobacco fiber portion with a solution containing hydrogen peroxide and an alkali metal hydroxide wherein said solution contains said hydrogen peroxide in a concentration of from 2.5% to 12.0% (w/w) and said alkali metal hydroxide is from about 1% to 5% (w/w); and,
- (d) separating said solution from said tobacco fiber portion.

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2. (Unchanged)

3. (currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein said tobacco is lamina. ~~contacted with said first aqueous solvent at a temperature of about 25 EC to 80 EC for about 0.5 to 2 hours.~~

4. cancelled

5-8 (Unchanged)


COPY

REMARKS

If the Examiner believes that there are other issues or other points which should be addressed, Applicant's attorney of record welcomes contact from the Examiner at the phone number or address listed below.

DATED: 05 Apr. 1 2004

Respectfully submitted,

 / CGL  
John F. Salazar, Reg. No. 39,353  
**MIDDLETON REUTLINGER**  
Suite 2500  
401 South Fourth Avenue  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202  
Unites States of America  
Phone: US (502) 625-2756  
Fax: US (502) 561-0442

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## REPLACEMENT PAGES

containing pyrolytic products emitted from smoking articles which contain the tobacco material.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a tobacco product with reduced levels of lignin and nitrogenous compounds.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a method of making a tobacco product with reduced levels of lignin and nitrogenous compounds.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method of treating tobacco which minimizes the break-up of tobacco solid materials.

More particularly, the present invention is directed to a method for reducing the lignin and nitrogenous content of tobacco material, including cured tobacco whole leaf, fines, scraps, stems, and lamina, as well as burley leaf and stem, comprising the steps of: contacting tobacco material with a first aqueous solvent, such as water, at a temperature of about 60°C to 80°C for about 0.5 to 1 hour; separating an aqueous tobacco extract from a tobacco fiber portion; contacting this washed tobacco fiber portion with a solution containing from 1% to 5% (weight/weight) alkali metal hydroxide and from 2.5% to 12% (weight/weight) hydrogen peroxide at a temperature of about 25°C to 120°C for about 0.5 to 4 hours; and, separating the resulting solution from the tobacco fiber portion. The resulting tobacco product is then dried and used in the manufacture of cigarette articles. Alternatively, the extract, or a portion thereof, may be added back to the tobacco product before drying.

A better understanding of the present invention will be realized from the hereafter processes and the Examples following such description.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIG. 1 is a schematic of the process steps representative of the present invention.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

REPLACEMENT PAGES

COPY

In a preferred method of carrying out the lignin and nitrogen reduction process of the present invention, tobacco materials (10) in the form of flue cured and burley stems, scraps, fines, and/or lamina are contacted with a first aqueous solvent (12), such as water, at a temperature of about 60°C to 80°C for about 0.5 to 1 hour. The contacting of the tobacco with the water (12) may be conducted in a tank or similar mixing vessel in which the water and tobacco are heated and agitated. The resulting aqueous tobacco extract, containing flavor compounds, is separated from the tobacco fiber portion, preferably by centrifugation (14). The tobacco/water slurry may be pumped into a centrifuge from the mixing vessel and centrifugally separated therein. Once removed from the tobacco fiber or lamina portion, the aqueous tobacco extract (15) may be reserved for reapplication to the fiber with or without separate processing. In one embodiment, the aqueous tobacco extract (15) may be contacted with a solid phase adsorbent (17), such as Bentonite or a cationic resin, in a vessel and then separated therefrom by centrifugation (19), or a similar separation process well known in the art. In another embodiment, the aqueous tobacco extract (15) may be pumped or passed through specialty filters, membranes, or column packed adsorbent/absorbent materials to remove soluble nitrogenous components, such as nitrates, proteins and nitrosamines (TSBAs), and polyphenolic compounds, and the like. The nitrogen-reduced aqueous tobacco extract containing flavor compounds may then be concentrated (23) by vacuum evaporation, and added back to a reconstituted tobacco paper (31).



COPY

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method of making a tobacco material with reduced levels of lignin and nitrogenous compounds comprising :
  - (a) contacting a tobacco material with a first aqueous solvent at a temperature of about 25°C to 80° C for about 0.5 to 2 hours to provide an aqueous tobacco extract and a tobacco fiber portion;
  - (b) separating said aqueous tobacco extract from said tobacco fiber portion;
  - (c) contacting at a temperature from about 25°C to 120°C said tobacco fiber portion with a solution containing hydrogen peroxide and an alkali metal hydroxide wherein said solution contains said hydrogen peroxide in a concentration of from 2.5% to 12.0% (w/w) and said alkali metal hydroxide is from about 1% to 5% (w/w); and,
  - (d) separating said solution from said tobacco fiber portion.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - (e) contacting said tobacco fiber portion with a second aqueous solvent.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said tobacco material is lamina.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said alkali metal hydroxide is sodium hydroxide.
6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said sodium hydroxide is from about 4% to 8 (w/w).
7. The method of Claim 5, wherein said alkali metal hydroxide is potassium hydroxide.
8. The method of Claim 7, wherein said potassium hydroxide is from about 4% to 8 % (w/w).